

Who are the special people in your life?

Do you have any pets?

Are there any places where you go that hold special memories for you?

When you are at home, where do you spend most of your time?

What are the things that you like to do?

Again, ask students to quietly think about some of the things they might include on their heart maps, then ask them to turn and share with a partner. Encourage students to ask questions as you did in the guided conversation to help their partner formulate ideas.

Independent Writing: Allow time for students to create their own heart maps. We have found that with young writers it is easier to provide a heart template, but students can certainly draw the heart outline on their own. When the heart maps are completed, ask students to think of a small story from one of the areas on their heart map, turn to a partner and share, then write a short entry in their journals or notebooks.

Reflection: After students share their entries with partners or in small groups, ask them to think about how the heart map they created can help them think of things to write about. Questions such as the following can help guide their thinking:

How can a heart map help you find a writing topic?

What will you write about next?

What are some stories you have about_____? (Choose a section from the map.)

Did listening to others share their heart maps give you ideas for yours?

Note: For very young children, the above lesson can be split and taught over two days. On the first day, just have the students create the heart map. On the second day, demonstrate how to choose a story from a section on the map and write it.